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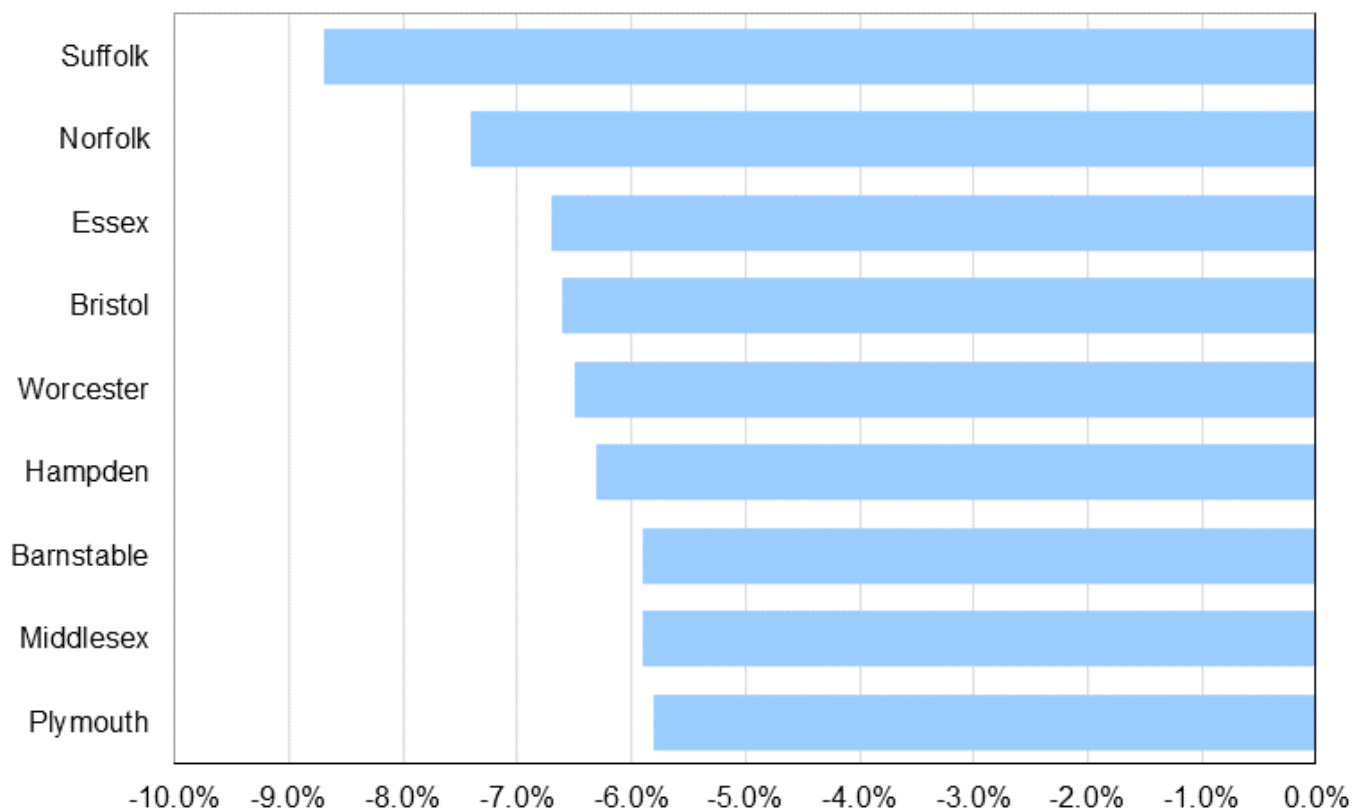
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## County Employment and Wages in Massachusetts – First Quarter 2021

Employment fell in the nine largest counties in Massachusetts from March 2020 to March 2021, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are those with annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more in 2020.) Regional Commissioner William J. Sibley noted that Suffolk County and Norfolk County had the largest over-the-year decreases in employment at 8.7 percent and 7.4 percent, respectively. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

**Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in covered employment among the largest counties in Massachusetts, March 2021**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

National employment decreased 4.5 percent over the year, with 324 of the 343 largest U.S. counties reporting declines. Calcasieu, LA, had the largest over-the-year decrease in employment with a loss of 14.9 percent. Utah, UT, experienced the largest over-the-year percentage increase in employment with a gain of 6.1 percent.

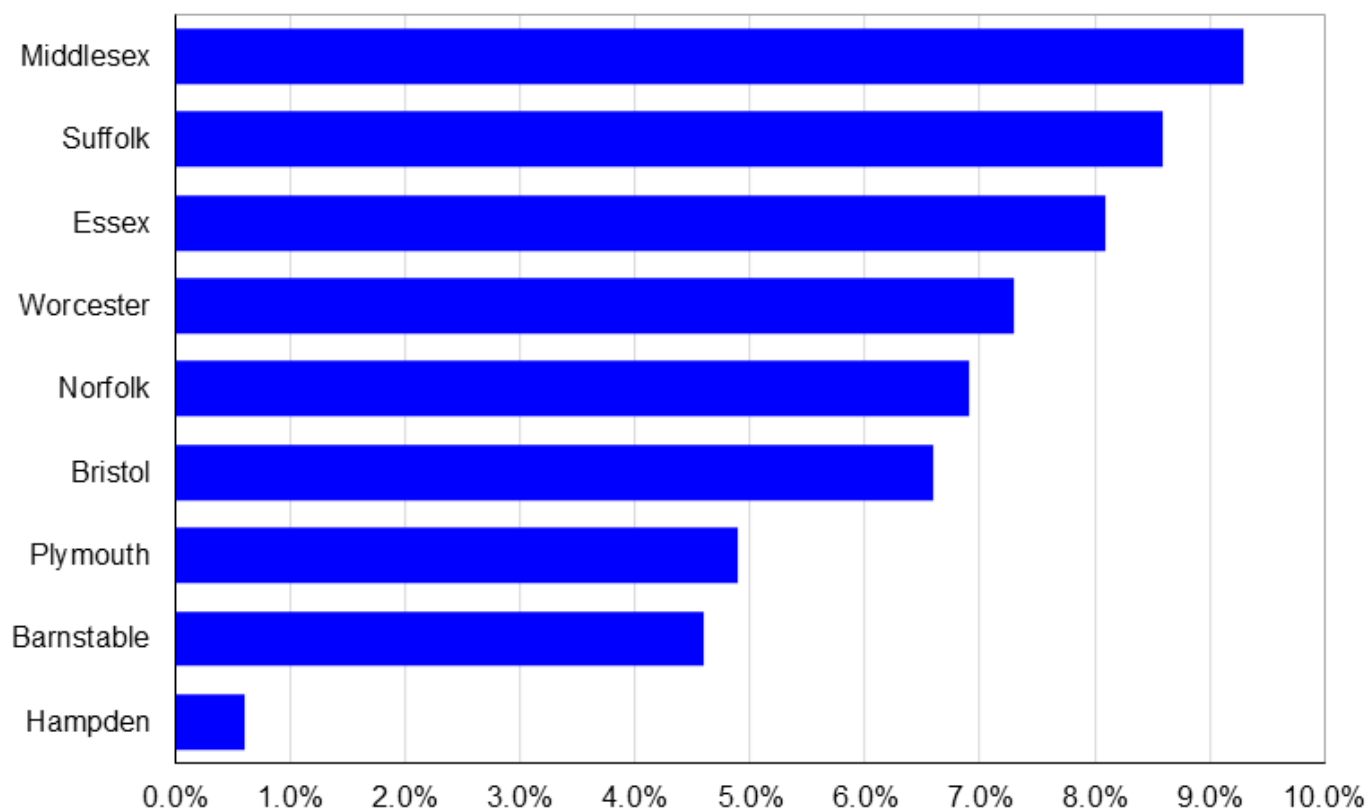
Among the nine largest counties in Massachusetts, employment was highest in Middlesex County (871,300) in March 2021. Within Middlesex County’s private industry, professional and technical services accounted for the largest employment. Together, the nine largest Massachusetts counties accounted for 93.7 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 343 largest counties made up 72.3 percent of total U.S. employment.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the five counties in Massachusetts with employment below 75,000. Wage levels in the smaller counties were below the national average in the first quarter of 2021. (See [table 2.](#))

### Large County Wage Changes

All nine large Massachusetts counties reported average weekly wage gains from the first quarter of 2020 to the first quarter of 2021. (See [chart 2.](#)) Six of these counties had rates of wage gains that were above the national rate of 5.6 percent. Middlesex County had the largest gain (+9.3 percent), followed by Suffolk County (+8.6 percent) and Essex County (+8.1 percent).

**Chart 2. Over-the-year percent change in covered average weekly wages among the largest counties in Massachusetts, first quarter 2021**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Among the 343 largest counties in the United States, 312 had over-the-year wage increases. Nationally, across most industries, increases in average weekly wages reflect substantial employment declines combined with wage increases. The lowest paying industry, leisure and hospitality, had the largest employment loss, which resulted in higher average weekly wages for the industry and the nation. San Francisco, CA, had the largest percentage wage increase (+33.9 percent). Clayton, GA, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease (-14.2 percent).

## Large County Average Weekly Wages

Weekly wages in the 4 of the 9 largest counties in Massachusetts were above the national average of \$1,289 in the first quarter of 2021. Average weekly wages in three of these counties ranked among the top 50 nationwide: Suffolk (\$2,545, 5<sup>th</sup>), Middlesex (\$2,107, 11<sup>th</sup>), and Norfolk (\$1,462, 47<sup>th</sup>).

Among the largest U.S. counties, 84 reported average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the first quarter of 2021. New York, NY, had the highest average weekly wage at \$3,967. Average weekly wages were below the national average in the remaining 259 counties. At \$685 a week, Cameron, TX, had the lowest average weekly wage.

## Average Weekly Wages in Massachusetts' Smaller Counties

Among the five smaller counties in Massachusetts—those with employment below 75,000—Nantucket (\$1,284) reported the highest average weekly wage, below the national average of \$1,289. Franklin County (\$887) reported the lowest average weekly wage in the state.

When all 14 counties in Massachusetts were considered, 2 reported average weekly wages of less than \$999, 6 registered wages from \$1,000 to \$1,199, 2 had wages from \$1,200 to \$1,299, 1 had wages from \$1,300 to \$1,399, and 3 had average weekly wages of \$1,400 or higher. (See [chart 3](#).)

## Additional Statistics and other Information

QCEW data for states have been included in this release in [table 3](#). For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the [Technical Note](#) or visit [www.bls.gov/cew](http://www.bls.gov/cew).

*Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. This publication is typically published in September of the following year of the reference period or shortly after the QCEW first quarter full data update. The *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* is available at [www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/](http://www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/).

## Technical Note

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS web site at [www.bls.gov/cew](http://www.bls.gov/cew). However, data in QCEW press releases have been revised and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's web site.

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons—some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS web site. These potential differences result from the states' continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Information in this release will be made available to individuals with sensory impairments upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

**Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the nine largest counties in Massachusetts, first quarter 2021**

Area	Establishments, first quarter 2021 (thousands)	Employment			Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
		March 2021 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2020–21 <sup>(2)</sup>	National ranking by percent change <sup>(3)</sup>	First quarter 2021	National ranking by level <sup>(3)</sup>	Percent change, first quarter 2020–21 <sup>(2)</sup>	National ranking by percent change <sup>(3)</sup>
United States <sup>(4)</sup> .....	10,755.4	140,455.8	-4.5	--	\$1,289	--	5.6	--
Massachusetts .....	271.2	3,334.9	-6.6	--	1,732	3	7.8	6
Barnstable .....	9.7	80.7	-5.9	228	1,038	214	4.6	145
Bristol .....	18.1	210.2	-6.6	262	1,076	183	6.6	70
Essex .....	28.6	299.0	-6.7	269	1,350	66	8.1	36
Hampden .....	19.4	195.4	-6.3	248	1,028	222	0.6	306
Middlesex .....	58.7	871.3	-5.9	228	2,107	11	9.3	22
Norfolk .....	26.1	320.5	-7.4	293	1,462	47	6.9	62
Plymouth .....	16.8	179.2	-5.8	225	1,162	136	4.9	129
Suffolk .....	32.8	642.6	-8.7	317	2,545	5	8.6	26
Worcester .....	27.3	327.2	-6.5	260	1,235	102	7.3	51

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Percent changes were computed from employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(3) Ranking does not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

**Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Massachusetts, first quarter 2021**

Area	Employment March 2021	Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>
United States <sup>(1)</sup> .....	140455819	1289
Massachusetts .....	3334946	1732
Barnstable .....	80671	1038
Berkshire .....	53322	998
Bristol .....	210169	1076
Dukes .....	6786	1182
Essex.....	298954	1350
Franklin.....	24226	887
Hampden.....	195399	1028
Hampshire .....	59976	1035
Middlesex .....	871264	2107
Nantucket .....	5554	1284
Norfolk .....	320498	1462
Plymouth .....	179225	1162
Suffolk.....	642560	2545
Worcester .....	327166	1235

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

NOTE: Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

**Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, first quarter 2021**

State	Establishments, first quarter 2021 (thousands)	Employment		Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
		March 2021 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2020–21	First quarter 2021	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2020–21	National ranking by percent change
United States <sup>(2)</sup> .....	10,755.4	140,455.8	-4.5	\$1,289	--	5.6	--
Alabama .....	135.9	1,924.3	-3.0	996	37	2.5	40
Alaska .....	23.3	295.0	-5.5	1,125	23	-0.6	48
Arizona .....	176.5	2,894.2	-2.3	1,150	21	4.8	17
Arkansas .....	95.3	1,194.2	-2.0	957	43	3.7	30
California .....	1,651.4	16,507.7	-5.9	1,623	4	11.3	1
Colorado .....	224.7	2,634.7	-3.5	1,335	10	4.1	25
Connecticut .....	128.3	1,550.5	-5.4	1,575	5	4.7	19
Delaware .....	35.2	425.6	-4.1	1,264	13	1.6	44
District of Columbia .....	44.0	708.1	-9.0	2,166	1	8.7	4
Florida .....	780.8	8,701.9	-3.1	1,104	24	5.1	13
Georgia.....	329.2	4,393.8	-2.6	1,198	17	3.6	33
Hawaii.....	48.0	564.4	-14.1	1,091	26	5.7	9
Idaho .....	74.2	768.6	1.9	906	50	4.9	15
Illinois .....	390.0	5,559.6	-5.5	1,387	8	6.7	7
Indiana.....	176.2	2,956.4	-2.5	1,026	34	3.3	37
Iowa .....	105.1	1,473.6	-3.3	1,004	35	2.6	39
Kansas .....	90.4	1,335.4	-3.3	986	39	1.9	43
Kentucky.....	130.7	1,835.2	-2.5	965	41	2.3	42
Louisiana .....	141.5	1,787.6	-5.9	977	40	1.0	46
Maine.....	56.2	585.0	-2.8	1,000	36	4.7	19
Maryland.....	174.3	2,522.1	-5.0	1,386	9	8.5	5
Massachusetts .....	271.2	3,334.9	-6.6	1,732	3	7.8	6
Michigan .....	267.5	4,026.6	-5.9	1,155	20	4.8	17
Minnesota .....	189.7	2,695.4	-5.1	1,290	11	4.6	22
Mississippi .....	75.3	1,098.4	-2.5	811	51	1.1	45
Missouri .....	221.8	2,705.5	-3.0	1,055	30	3.7	30
Montana .....	53.2	465.2	0.1	915	48	5.4	10
Nebraska .....	73.4	944.7	-2.8	990	38	3.6	33
Nevada .....	92.8	1,291.5	-8.4	1,080	27	4.7	19
New Hampshire .....	56.8	631.8	-3.9	1,258	15	5.4	10
New Jersey.....	297.0	3,818.6	-5.5	1,533	7	5.3	12
New Mexico .....	65.2	774.5	-7.4	958	42	3.8	28
New York .....	664.6	8,587.8	-8.7	1,869	2	10.4	2
North Carolina .....	302.7	4,423.2	-1.7	1,137	22	4.1	25
North Dakota .....	32.3	388.7	-6.1	1,037	32	-0.9	51
Ohio .....	310.1	5,136.8	-3.9	1,098	25	3.3	37
Oklahoma .....	114.4	1,549.7	-3.7	939	46	-0.8	50
Oregon .....	169.4	1,841.9	-5.2	1,172	18	6.4	8
Pennsylvania .....	369.7	5,531.3	-5.4	1,226	16	4.3	23
Rhode Island .....	41.2	447.8	-5.6	1,171	19	3.4	35
South Carolina.....	150.1	2,056.2	-2.6	957	43	3.8	28
South Dakota.....	35.6	417.1	-0.9	932	47	3.4	35
Tennessee .....	180.2	2,968.7	-2.1	1,077	28	5.0	14
Texas .....	750.1	12,216.7	-3.4	1,261	14	2.4	41
Utah .....	117.3	1,548.8	1.5	1,065	29	3.7	30
Vermont.....	27.0	283.7	-6.9	1,028	33	4.9	15
Virginia.....	291.3	3,765.8	-3.9	1,285	12	4.2	24
Washington.....	261.2	3,252.0	-5.1	1,540	6	9.1	3
West Virginia .....	52.3	648.6	-3.8	911	49	0.8	47
Wisconsin .....	183.1	2,730.0	-3.7	1,047	31	3.9	27
Wyoming .....	27.8	255.9	-4.6	953	45	-0.6	48
Puerto Rico.....	47.1	856.5	-3.1	562	(3)	2.0	(3)
Virgin Islands.....	3.6	34.7	-14.0	961	(3)	-8.0	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

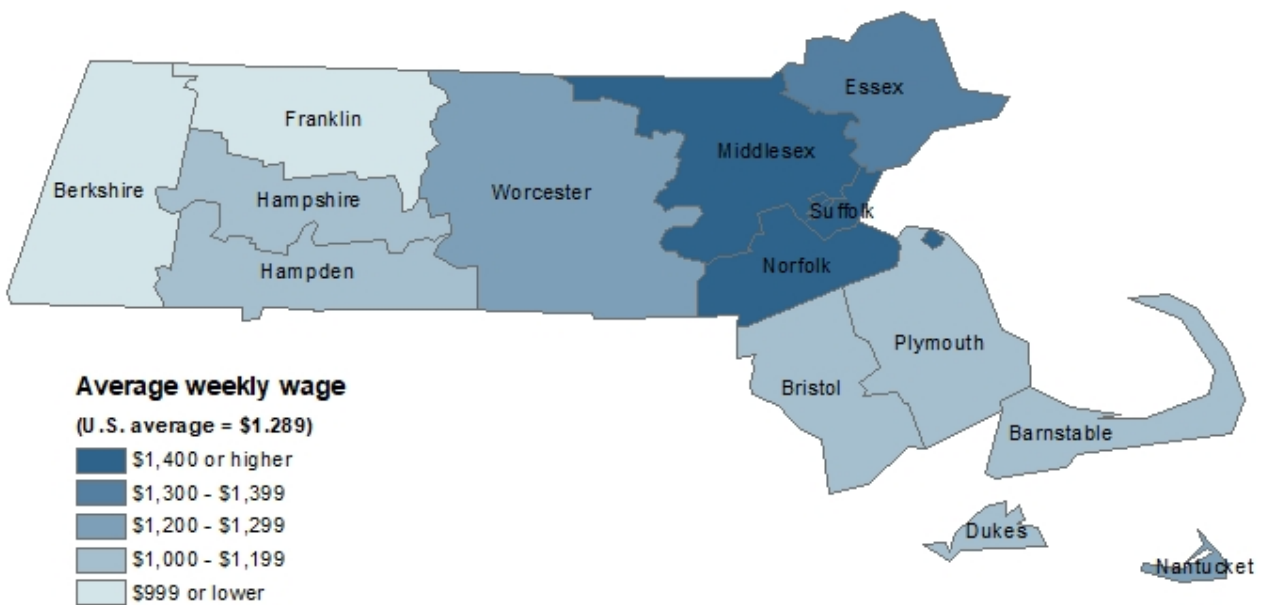
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(3) Data not included in the national ranking.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

**Chart 3. Average weekly wages by county in Massachusetts, first quarter 2021**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics